CLAIMS

1. A method of searching a plurality of information databases for records related to an input search term, comprising:-

selecting a group of related search terms containing the input search term, from a search database of terms arranged in predefined groups according to their relationship with one another, wherein each term is present within one or more of the information databases; and,

searching for terms from the selected group within a data repository comprising selected data previously extracted from the records of each information database, to identify the corresponding records within the information databases which contain the terms within the selected group.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the data repository is arranged as a number of records, each record corresponding to a record present within one of the information databases.

3. A method according to claim 2, wherein each record in the repository comprises a pointer identifying the record in the information database to which it relates.

4. A method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the amount of selected data in the repository is less than that contained in the information databases.

5. A method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the data in the repository comprises definitional data.

6. A method according to claim 5, wherein the definitional data describe data in terms of its nature, use or value.

7. A method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the data in the repository comprises semantic data.

8. A method according to claim 7, wherein the semantic data describes alternative terms for the data in the information database.

9. A method according to claim 8, wherein the semantic data describe synonymous terms in the information databases.

10. A method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein each term in each predefined group within the search database has associated meta-data indicating the one or more information databases within which the term is contained.

11. A method according to claim 10, wherein the corresponding meta-data indicates the one or more fields of the information database(s) within which it is contained.

12. A method according to any of the preceding claims wherein a number of records within the data repository are assigned to a domain.

13. A method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the terms in the predefined groups within the search database are synonymous terms.

14. A method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein each group has an associated group identifier.

15. A method according to claim 13 or claim 14, wherein each group has associated descriptive data for describing the group.

16. A method according to any of the preceding claims, further comprising determining the context of any repository records located.

17. A method according to claim 16 and when dependent upon claim 12, wherein the context is determined by limiting the search to repository records having a common domain.

18. A method according to claim 16 or claim 17, wherein the context is determined by searching for the presence of one or more of the other terms within the group, in the same record of the repository.

19. A method according to any of claims 16 to 18, wherein the context is determined by searching in related classes of terms.

20. A method according to any of claims 16 to 20, wherein the context is determined by the proximity of one or more related terms within a record.

21. A computer program comprising computer program code means adapted to perform the method according to any of the preceding claims.

22. A computer program according to claim 21, embodied upon a computer readable medium.

23. A database searching system for searching a plurality of information databases for records related to an inputted search term, the system comprising:-

a search database comprising related search terms arranged into predefined groups according to their relationship to one another, wherein each term is present within one or more of the information databases;

selection means, for selecting a group containing the inputted search term from the search database;

a data repository comprising selected data previously extracted from the records of each information database; and,

searching means for searching the repository for terms from the selected group to identify the corresponding records within the information databases which contain the terms within the selected group.

24. A system according to claim 23, wherein further comprising an input means for supplying the inputted search term to the selection means.

25. A system according to claim 24, wherein the input means comprises a communication network such that the inputted search term is received from a remote location.

26. A system according to any of claims claim 23 to 25, further comprising a plurality of information databases from which data is extracted for storage within the data repository.

27. A system according to any of claims 23 to 26, wherein the data repository, is stored upon a separate computer system with respect to the information databases.